

RON THORNBURGH  
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## STATE OF KANSAS

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### *Media Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

*Monday November 5, 2001*

### **THORNBURGH RELEASED STATUS REPORT FOR ELECTION REFORM IN KANSAS**

One year after the November 2000 election, Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh released a status report for election reform in Kansas. *"Last year's presidential election presented a perfect opportunity to review election procedures in Kansas and improve our system,"* stated Thornburgh. *"Following last November's election my staff and I outlined a six-point improvement plan for reform in Kansas, in which we called for enhanced education for local officials and better voter registration record maintenance. To date, implementation is well underway, including development of statewide election standards, legislative initiatives, and preparations for a four state election conference to take place next month."*

In May of 2001, Secretary Thornburgh appointed a task force of county election officials to assist his office in developing a set of Election Standards. The Bush v. Gore ruling by the United States Supreme Court requires a consistency of process in every county and polling place. This set of Election Standards will ensure Kansas' compliance with the Supreme Court's ruling. The standards will include rules on counting provisional ballots, counting write-in votes, defining what constitutes a vote, and processing petitions. The task force plans to present the report in May of 2002 at the Kansas County Clerk and Election Officials Association's 2002 Spring Conference in Hutchinson.

Thornburgh proposed a number of recommendations to the Kansas Legislature during the 2001 session. Three major legislative initiatives passed include beefing up election crime statutes, improvements to the recount process, and clarification of the procedures for handling and counting provisional ballots.

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In addition to legislation, the Secretary of State's office is organizing a Four State Midwest Election Officials Conference to be held in Kansas City on December 9 -12. County and state election officials from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa will meet and discuss the Florida 2000 election experience, counting ballots, federal election reform legislation, voter outreach, recruiting and training local election board workers, and updating standards for voting equipment. Included at the conference will be a number of educational sessions and a technology exposition on voting equipment.

*"As President of the National Association of Secretaries of State, I have spent the last year working with the United States Congress to craft federal election reform without unnecessary and unfunded federal mandates. I will continue to lead the fight until we accomplish our goal."*

*"Kansas has a proud tradition of leading the nation in fair and accurate elections,"* stated Thornburgh. *"We have implemented responsible reform for the 2002 Election and Kansans can continue to trust that their vote will be counted."*

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Ron Thornburgh is the 29<sup>th</sup> Kansas Secretary of State. He was first elected to his first four-year term in 1994. Ron is a native of Burlingame. He graduated from Washburn University in 1985. Ron, his wife Annette and sons Grey and Tanner live in Topeka, where they are members of the First United Methodist Church.